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Celebrating 30 years of improving patient care

The collaboration of nurses that form part of the organisation providing support, advice and guidance—principally to nurses working in positions directly related to nutrition—reaches its 30th anniversary this year. The National Nurses Nutrition Group (NNNG) was formed in 1986 and soon after its inception, it obtained charitable status with an overall aim of improving nutritional care for the patients and the public. The group traditionally provided a support network including educational updates for its members, so they were able to improve practice for the patients they cared for. Its nursing members had traditionally worked within the hospital setting, and in many cases alongside consultants in surgery or gastroenterology. However, over the last 30 years, the role of a nutrition nurse has evolved to encompass not only artificial nutritional support, but oral nutrition and hydration too. The nursing roles have facilitated the growth and development of multiprofessional nutrition teams, a model historically used in health-care specialities, such as diabetes and stroke. Where nutritional teams have been effectively established, care has been coordinated and managed to positively influence patient outcomes and reduce feeding related complications. The NNNG and its membership has continued to develop alongside the changing role in health care and the advances in clinical nutrition. The group principally established to support nurses back in 1986 has welcomed members from the multiprofessional team, including dietitians, pharmacists and consultants. This has undoubtedly reflected the team approach in clinical practice and resulted in a richer diverse membership for the NNNG. The expertise of the group has been able to support the growth in communitybased nutrition nursing roles, and in many cases, integrated roles from the hospital to cover or work in partnership with community services. The NNNG has continued to respond to these developments and used its diverse membership and the changing face of health-care provision to publish good practice guidelines. The guidelines developed and published a number of years ago originally charged non-members to download them. However, in its 30th year, the group has made these freely available to access on its website (www.nnng.org.uk) to continue its drive and commitment to improve patient quality nutritional care across all settings and fulfil its aim under its constitution to be there for ‘the public benefit’.